



Elections Matter

What's At Stake for AFT Members and the People We Serve General Talking Points

- This election is an opportunity to choose decency over cruelty. The other side wants everyone to fend for themselves, but they're hellbent on creating an economy where they're the only ones who can. I'm running to bring voice and opportunity back to the rest of us.
- Unions are under attack. Instead of bringing the country together, the Trump administration and its allies have spent more than a year undermining our democratic norms and pushing an agenda for the rich—from ripping healthcare away from millions to enacting tax cuts that give 83 percent of the benefits to the richest people in our country.
- Corporate profits are skyrocketing and the wealthy find new ways to enrich themselves, while educators, nurses, healthcare professionals and public employees are working three jobs just to afford healthcare and parents are defaulting on their kids' college loans.
- Conservatives have tried to rebrand populism, but they govern for the elite. Their policies have left the rest of us high and dry at almost every turn:
 - They cut taxes for the wealthy instead of investing in public schools, healthcare and infrastructure.
 - They wage a war on unions, weaponizing the First Amendment and seeking to take away workers' voices at every turn.
 - They nominate dangerous zealots like Betsy DeVos, who has tried to defund and dismantle public education while doing everything in her power to prioritize for-profits and student loan companies over students.
 - And, they fight to endanger healthcare protections for the millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions.
- All Americans want a shot at a better life: decent wages and affordable college. Today, college comes with a hefty price tag, and the Department of Education and predatory loan servicers are denying millions of working people information on flexible repayment options to manage their education debt.



- We know that 34 million people qualify for public service loan forgiveness, but fewer than 740,000 have enrolled. Before the Trump administration began dismantling the agency entirely, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau issued a report suggesting that student loan servicers are giving out incorrect information about these repayment plans and are withholding services that may help borrowers.
 - Educators, nurses and everyday working people struggle with student debt more than any other kind. One in 3 say they have had their student loans go into default, and 8 out of 10 say student debt is a major challenge for them in planning their financial future.
 - We're fighting to increase federal aid for programs like Pell Grants, income-driven repayment plans and Public Service Loan Forgiveness.
 - It's critical to keep fighting for accessible, affordable college and to make sure relief and enforcement mechanisms are in place to help borrowers who are struggling.
-
- While pockets exist where unions still have real power, wages have stagnated over the past four decades, yet the cost of everything from healthcare and college to adequate housing and groceries has skyrocketed. Working families have suffered, and the ways we enable opportunity in the United States have been weakened.
 - In 25 states, public K-12 education has been stripped of \$19 billion over the last decade. In state after state, right-wing politicians have decimated investments in education, healthcare and communities in favor of tax cuts for corporations. *The top 25 hedge fund managers make more than all the nation's kindergarten teachers combined.*
 - People get that joining unions is the way to collectively win a better life for themselves and their communities—to maintain dignity and establish fair wages. Unions fight for voice and freedom at work and at the ballot box, just as striking teachers did this past winter and spring. Unions are the best vehicle for working people to create a more perfect nation.
 - This election is a “which side are you on?” moment. Will you support candidates who invest in public education, protect the checks and balances on our democracy, and fight to preserve healthcare? That's the side of progress. That's the side we're on.